PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES
IN NOVA SCOTIA
A STATISTICAL REPORT

DISABLED PERSONS COMMISSION
2004

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this publication is to provide a demographic overview of persons with disabilities in Nova Scotia. The publication is intended to provide a quick reference for individuals and/or organizations who may be involved in developing policies or programs that impact directly upon persons with disabilities in Nova Scotia. The information provided in this publication has been obtained from the latest Participation and Activity Limitation Survey (PALS) collected in 2001. In several tables and figures, information from the 1991 and 1986 Health and Activity Limitation Survey (HALS) has been included for comparison purposes with the 2001 data.

The content of the handbook consists of a series of comparative statistical tables and figures presented on topics ranging from general demographic information and various socio-economic characteristics related to persons with disabilities.

Table totals and percentages for each category have been included wherever possible. In some cases the table totals and the accompanying percentages have been calculated by the Nova Scotia Disabled Persons Commission, and therefore are not the responsibility of Statistics Canada.

> Prior to using the figures included in this handbook it is important to acknowledge the operational definition of "disability" used by Statistics Canada in collecting this data. The Participation and Activity Limitation Survey uses the World Health Organization's (WHO) framework of disability provided by the International Classification of Functioning (ICF). This framework defines disability as the relationship between body structures and functions, daily activities and social participation, while recognizing the role of environmental factors.
>
> For the purpose of PALS, persons with disabilities are those who reported difficulties with daily living activities, or who indicated that a physical, mental condition or health problem reduced the kind or amount of activities they could do.[1]

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[1] World Health Organizations

GENERAL DEMOGRAPHICS FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

TABLE 1.1

Disability Rate and Population Size for Canada, Provinces 2001

		Number of Persons with Disabilities	
CANADA AND PROVINCES	DISABILITY RATE (%) 15+ YEARS	15+ YEARS	TOTAL
CANADA	**14.6**	**3,420,340**	**3,601,270**
Nova Scotia	20.1[1]	146,000	152,210
Newfoundland & Labrador	14.1	57,690	60,490
Prince Edward Island	17.0	18,030	18,970
New Brunswick	16.9	98,530	102,860
Quebec	9.8	568,800	595,690
Ontario	16.0	1,436,040	1,514,380
Manitoba	16.9	139,660	147,520
Saskatchewan	17.3	118,730	124,210
Alberta	14.8	331,760	354,740
British Columbia	16.3	505,090	530,130

[1] Please note that 20. 1 % is for adult persons with disabilities 15 years + . The rate for all age categories for Nova Scotia is 17.1 %

TABLE 1.2

Disability Rate for Canada, Provinces and Territories 1986, 1991 and 2001 for all Age Groups [2]

CANADA AND PROVINCES	DISABILITY RATE (%) FOR ALL AGE GROUPS		
	1986	1991	2001
Canada	13.2	15.5	12.4
Nova Scotia	16.9	21.3	17.1
Newfoundland and Labrador	13.1	10.0	12.3
Prince Edward Island	14.7	16.9	14.3
New Brunswick	15.5	17.7	14.4
Quebec	11.2	12.5	8.5
Ontario	13.9	16.0	13.5
Manitoba	15.7	17.6	14.2
Saskatchewan	13.9	19.1	14.5
Alberta	11.9	17.0	12.5
British Columbia	13.8	16.7	13.9
Yukon	8.7	11.1	---
Northwest Territories	8.8	12.6	---

[2] Please note that comparing the disability rates for 1986, 1991 and 2001 should only be used as a rough guideline since Statistics Canada used different definitions of disability in these years.

TABLE 1.3

Types of Disability for Adults Aged 15 Years and Over, by Sex, Canada 2001

Type of Disability	Total	%	Male	Female
Hearing	1,038,140	9.7	574,350	463,780
Seeing	594,350	5.5	225,890	368,450
Speech	362,720	3.4	189,690	173,030
Mobility	2,451,570	22.9	976,270	1,475,290
Agility	2,276,980	21.3	951,200	1,325,780
Pain	2,376,730	22.2	1,001,120	1,375,610
Learning	451,420	4.2	246,470	204,950
Memory	420,750	3.9	209,810	210,930
Developmental	120,140	1.1	73,790	46,350
Psychological	522,950	4.9	223,390	299,550
Unknown	96,180	0.9	50,010	46,170

TABLE 1.4

Types of Disability for Adults Aged 15 Years and Over, Nova Scotia 2001

Type of Disability	%	Total
Hearing	10.9	49,290
Seeing	5.5	24,860
Speech	3.2	14,650
Mobility	23.4	105,970
Agility	21.3	96,580
Pain	22.8	103,150
Learning	3.7	16,700
Memory	3.3	14,910
Developmental	0.6	2,600
Psychological	4.5	20,250
Unknown	0.9	4,070

TABLE 1.5

Disability Rates and Numbers for Adults Aged 15 Years and Over, by Sex and Age Groups, Canada 2001

	PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES					
	TOTAL	%	MALE	%	FEMALE	%
Age Groups						
Total - Aged 15 years and over	**3,420,340**	**14.6**	**1,526,900**	**13.4**	**1,893,440**	**15.7**
15-64	1,968,490	9.9	921,020	9.4	1,047,470	10.4
15-24	151,030	3.9	74,500	3.8	76,530	4.0
25-44	626,610	7.1	288,590	6.6	338,030	7.5
45-64	1,190,850	16.7	557,940	15.9	632,910	17.5
65 and Over	1,451,840	40.5	605,880	38.5	845,970	42.0
65-74	649,180	31.2	296,310	30.2	352,860	32.0
75 and over	802,670	53.3	309,570	52.1	493,100	54.1

TABLE 1.6

Disability Rates and Numbers for Adults Aged 15 Years and Over, by Sex and Age Groups, Nova Scotia 2001

	PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES					
	TOTAL	%	MALE	%	FEMALE	%
Age Groups						
Total - Aged 15 years and over	**146,000**	**20.1**	**67,920**	**19.5**	**78,080**	**20.6**
15-64	87,310	14.4	43,360	14.6	43,940	14.1
15-24	6,190	5.3	3,080	5.3	3,110	5.4
25-44	26,200	9.9	12,580	9.9	13,630	10.0
45-64	54,910	24.1	27,710	24.8	27,210	23.4
65 and Over	58,690	49.3	24,560	48.0	34,130	50.2
65-74	26,020	39.7	12,020	39.3	14,000	40.1
75 and over	32,670	61.0	12,540	61.1	20,130	60.9

TABLE 1.7

Adults With and Without Disabilities, Aged 15 Years and Over, by Sex and Age Groups, Canada 2001

	TOTAL POPULATION		
	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE
Age Groups			
Total - Aged 15 years and over	**23,445,760**	**11,395,690**	**12,050,070**
15-64	19,858,350	9,821,720	10,036,630
15-24	3,883,690	1,980,020	1,903,680
25-44	8,849,090	4,340,320	4,508,770
45-64	7,125,570	3,501,380	3,624,190
65 and Over	3,587,410	1,573,970	2,013,430
65-74	2,082,750	980,210	1,102,540
75 and over	1,504,660	593,770	910,890
	PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES		
	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE
Age Groups			
Total - Aged 15 years and over	**3,420,340**	**1,526,900**	**1,893,440**
15-64	1,968,490	921,020	1,047,470
15-24	151,030	74,500	76,530
25-44	626,610	288,590	338,030
45-64	1,190,850	557,940	632,910
65 and Over	1,451,840	605,880	845,970
65-74	649,180	296,310	352,860
75 and over	802,670	309,570	493,100

TABLE 1.8

Adults With and Without Disabilities, Aged 15 Years and Over, by Sex and Age Groups, Nova Scotia 2001

	TOTAL POPULATION		
	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE
Age Groups			
Total - Aged 15 years and over	**726,670**	**348,020**	**378,660**
15-64	607,570	296,880	310,680
15-24	115,840	58,070	57,760
25-44	263,600	127,010	136,590
45-64	228,130	111,800	116,330
65 and Over	119,100	51,130	67,970
65-74	65,520	30,600	34,920
75 and over	53,590	20,540	33,050
	PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES		
	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE
Age Groups			
Total - Aged 15 years and over	**146,000**	**67,920**	**78,080**
15-64	87,310	43,360	43,940
15-24	6,190	3,080	3,110
25-44	26,200	12,580	13,630
45-64	54,910	27,710	27,210
65 and Over	58,690	24,560	34,130
65-74	26,020	12,020	14,000
75 and over	32,670	12,540	20,130

TABLE 1.9

Children Under 15 Years of Age With and Without Disabilities, by Sex and Age Groups, Nova Scotia 2001

	TOTAL POPULATION		
	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE
Age Groups			
Total - Aged 0-14	**162,220**	**82,710**	**79,510**
0-4	46,510	24,020	22,490
5-14	115,710	58,690	57,020
5-9	54,860	27,460	27,400
10-14	60,850	31,230	29,620
	CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES		
	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE
Age Groups			
Total - Aged 0-14	**6,210**	**3,960**	**2,250**
0-4	630	350	270
5-14	5,580	3,610	1,980
5-9	2,340	1,550	790
10-14	3,250	2,060	1,190

TABLE 1.10

Disability Rates and Numbers for Children Under 15, by Sex and Age Groups, Canada 2001

	CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES					
			Males		Females	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
Age Groups						
Total - Aged 0-14	180,930	3.3	113,220	4.0	67,710	2.5
0-4	26,210	1.6	16,030	1.9	10,180	1.3
5-14	154,720	4.0	97,180	4.9	57,530	3.0
5-9	70,370	3.7	45,050	4.6	25,320	2.7
10-14	84,350	4.2	52,130	5.1	32,220	3.3

TABLE 1.11

Disability Rates and Numbers for Children Under 15, by Sex and Age Groups, Nova Scotia 2001

	CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES					
			Males		Females	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
Age Groups						
Total - Aged 0-14	6,210	3.8	3,960	4.8	2,250	2.8
0-4	630	1.3	350	1.5	270	1.2
5-14	5,580	4.8	3,610	6.1	1,980	3.5
5-9	2,340	4.3	1,550	5.6	790	2.9
10-14	3,250	5.3	2,060	6.6	1,190	4.0

TABLE 1.12

Disability Rates for Adults Aged 15 Years and Over, by Degree of Severity, for Canada and Provinces 2001

	Degree of Severity - Percent				
	Total	Mild	Moderate	Severe	Very Severe
Canada	**14.6**	**5.0**	**3.6**	**3.9**	**2.0**
Nova Scotia	20.1	6.8	5.3	5.3	2.6
Newfoundland and Labrador	14.1	4.5	3.7	3.7	2.2
Prince Edward Island	17.0	6.4	4.9	3.8	1.9
New Brunswick	16.9	5.6	4.5	4.7	2.1
Quebec	9.8	3.0	2.3	2.8	1.7
Ontario	16.0	5.2	3.9	4.5	2.3
Manitoba	16.9	6.2	4.6	4.0	2.0
Saskatchewan	17.3	6.9	4.2	4.6	1.7
Alberta	14.8	5.7	3.8	3.7	1.6
British Columbia	16.3	6.0	4.3	3.9	2.0

TABLE 1.13

Severity of Disability for Adults Aged 15 Years and Over, by Age Groups, Canada 2001

AGE GROUPS TOTALS	Severity of disability									
			Mild		Moderate		Severe		Very Severe	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
Total - Aged 15 years and over	3,420,340	100.0	1,165,470	34.1	855,330	25.0	919,310	26.9	480,220	14.0
15-64	1,968,490	100.0	647,380	32.9	494,580	25.1	548,060	27.8	278,470	14.1
15-24	151,030	100.0	69,240	45.8	35,480	23.5	29,820	19.7	16,480	10.9
25-44	626,610	100.0	217,850	34.8	165,150	26.4	167,630	26.8	75,980	12.1
45-64	1,190,850	100.0	360,290	30.3	293,950	24.7	350,610	29.4	186,010	15.6
65 and over	1,451,840	100.0	518,090	35.7	360,750	24.8	371,260	25.6	201,750	13.9
65-74	649,180	100.0	258,110	39.8	173,070	26.7	151,820	23.4	66,180	10.2
75 and over	802,670	100.0	259,980	32.4	187,680	23.4	219,440	27.3	135,570	16.9

TABLE 1.14

Severity of Disability for Adult Males Aged 15 Years and Over, by Age Groups, Canada 2001

AGE GROUPS	Severity of Disability									
			Mild		Moderate		Severe		Very Severe	
MALES	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
Total - Aged 15 years and over	1,526,900	100.0	555,110	36.4	375,380	24.6	383,570	25.1	212,830	13.9
15-64	921,020	100.0	316,760	34.4	228,800	24.8	245,040	26.6	130,420	14.2
15-24	74,500	100.0	33,610	45.1	17,960	24.1	13,750	18.5	9,180	12.3
25-44	288,590	100.0	108,860	37.7	71,380	24.7	73,580	25.5	34,770	12.0
45-64	557,940	100.0	174,290	31.2	139,460	25.0	157,720	28.3	86,480	15.5
65 and over	605,880	100.0	238,350	39.3	146,580	24.2	138,530	22.9	82,410	13.6
65-74	296,310	100.0	132,280	44.6	75,230	25.4	59,150	20.0	29,650	10.0
75 and over	309,570	100.0	106,070	34.3	71,350	23.0	79,380	25.6	52,760	17.0

TABLE 1.15

Severity of Disability for Adult Females Aged 15 Years and Over, by Age Groups, Canada 2001

AGE GROUPS FEMALES	Severity of Disability									
			Mild		Moderate		Severe		Very Severe	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
Total - Aged 15 years and over	1,893,440	100.0	610,360	32.2	479,950	25.3	535,740	28.3	267,390	14.1
15-64	1,047,470	100.0	330,620	31.6	265,780	25.4	303,020	28.9	148,050	14.1
15-24	76,530	100.0	35,630	46.6	17,530	22.9	16,070	21.0	7,310	9.5
25-44	338,030	100.0	108,990	32.2	93,770	27.7	94,050	27.8	41,220	12.2
45-64	632,910	100.0	186,000	29.4	154,490	24.4	192,890	30.5	99,530	15.7
65 and over	845,970	100.0	279,740	33.1	214,170	25.3	232,730	27.5	119,340	14.1
65-74	352,860	100.0	125,830	35.7	97,840	27.7	92,660	26.3	36,530	10.4
75 and over	493,100	100.0	153,910	31.2	116,330	23.6	140,060	28.4	82,810	16.8

TABLE 1.16

Severity of Disability for Adults Aged 15 Years and Over, by Age Groups, Nova Scotia 2001

AGE GROUPS	Severity of Disability									
			Mild		Moderate		Severe		Very Severe	
TOTAL	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
Total - Aged 15 years and over	146,000	100.0	49,750	34.1	38,550	26.4	38,510	26.4	19,190	13.1
15-64	87,310	100.0	28,550	32.7	24,090	27.6	24,010	27.5	10,660	12.2
15-24	6,190	100.0	3,010	48.7	1,660	26.8	940	15.1	580	9.4
25-44	26,200	100.0	9,140	34.9	7,670	29.3	6,580	25.1	2,820	10.8
45-64	54,910	100.0	16,400	29.9	14,750	26.9	16,490	30.0	7,270	13.2
65 and over	58,690	100.0	21,210	36.1	14,460	24.6	14,500	24.7	8,520	14.5
65-74	26,020	100.0	10,880	41.8	6,120	23.5	6,100	23.4	2,910	11.2
75 and over	32,670	100.0	10,320	31.6	8,340	25.5	8,400	25.7	5,610	17.2

TABLE 1.17

Severity of Disability for Adult Males Aged 15 Years and Over, by Age Groups, Nova Scotia 2001

AGE GROUPS	Severity of Disability									
			Mild		Moderate		Severe		Very Severe	
MALES	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
Total - Aged 15 years and over	67,920	100.0	23,050	33.9	17,490	25.8	18,620	27.4	8,760	12.9
15-64	43,360	100.0	14,140	32.6	11,520	26.6	12,810	29.5	4,890	11.3
15-24	3,080	100.0	1,390	45.2	910	29.7	450	14.6	330	10.6
25-44	12,580	100.0	4,490	35.7	3,570	28.4	3,140	25.0	1,380	10.9
45-64	27,710	100.0	8,260	29.8	7,030	25.4	9,220	33.3	3,190	11.5
65 and over	24,560	100.0	8,910	36.3	5,980	24.3	5,810	23.7	3,860	15.7
65-74	12,020	100.0	4,670	38.8	2,930	24.4	2,880	24.0	1,540	12.8
75 and over	12,540	100.0	4,240	33.8	3,050	24.3	2,930	23.3	2,320	18.5

TABLE 1.18

Severity of Disability for Adult Females Aged 15 Years and Over, by Age Groups, Nova Scotia 2001

AGE GROUPS	Severity of Disability									
			Mild		Moderate		Severe		Very Severe	
FEMALES	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
Total - Aged 15 years and over	78,080	100.0	26,700	34.2	21,050	27.0	19,890	25.5	10,430	13.4
15-64	43,940	100.0	14,410	32.8	12,570	28.6	11,200	25.5	5,770	13.1
15-24	3,110	100.0	1,620	52.1	750	24.0	490	15.7	250	8.2
25-44	13,630	100.0	4,650	34.1	4,100	30.1	3,430	25.2	1,440	10.6
45-64	27,210	100.0	8,130	29.9	7,720	28.4	7,270	26.7	4,070	15.0
65 and over	34,130	100.0	12,300	36.0	8,480	24.8	8,690	25.5	4,660	13.7
65-74	14,000	100.0	6,220	44.4	3,190	22.8	3,220	23.0	1,370	9.8
75 and over	20,130	100.0	6,080	30.2	5,290	26.3	5,480	27.2	3,290	16.3

APPENDIX A

DEFINITIONS

Disability

The Participation and Activity Limitation Survey uses the World Health Organization's (WHO) framework of disability provided by the International Classification of Functioning (ICF). This framework defines disability as the relationship between body structures and functions, daily activities and social participation, while recognizing the role of environmental factors.

For the purpose of PALS, persons with disabilities are those who reported difficulties with daily living activities, or who indicated that a physical, mental condition or health problem reduced the kind or amount of activities they could do.

The respondent's answers to the disability questions represent their perception of the situation and are therefore subjective.

Disability Rate

Refers to the total number of persons who reported activity limitations expressed as a percentage of the population. For example, the calculation of the disability rate for the population aged 15 to 64 in Ontario is as follows: (Number of persons with disabilities aged 15-64 in Ontario/Total population aged 15-64 in Ontario) x 100

Severity of Disability

An index measuring the severity of the disability was constructed based on the answers to the survey questions. Points were given according to the intensity and the frequency of the activity limitations reported by the respondent. A single score was computed for each type of disability. Each score was then standardized in order to have a value between 0 and 1. The final score is the average of the scores for each type of disability.

Since the survey questions differ depending on the age of the respondent, a different scale was constructed for adults (15 years and over), for children under 5 and for children aged 5 to 14. Each scale was then divided into different severity levels. The scale for adults and for children aged 5 to 14 was divided into four groups (*that is, mild, moderate, severe and very severe)*, while the scale for children under 5 was divided into two groups (*that is, mild to moderate and severe to very severe*).

APPENDIX B

Type of Disability - Adults

The PALS survey questions allow the identification of the following types of disabilities among adults aged 15 and over:

Hearing: Difficulty hearing what is being said in a conversation with one other person, in a conversation with three or more persons or in a telephone conversation.

Seeing: Difficulty seeing ordinary newsprint or clearly seeing the face of someone from 4 metres (12 feet).

Speech: Difficulty speaking and/or being understood.

Mobility: Difficulty walking half a kilometer or up and down a flight of stairs, about 12 steps without resting, moving from one room to another, carrying an object of 5 kg (10 pounds) for 10 metres (30 feet) or standing for long periods.

Agility: Difficulty bending, dressing or undressing oneself, getting into and out of bed, cutting own toenails, using fingers to grasp or handling objects, reaching in any direction (for example, above one's head) or cutting own food.

Pain: Limited in the amount of kind of activities that one can do because of a long-term pain that is constant or reoccurs from time to time, for example, recurrent back pain.

Learning: Difficulty learning because of a condition, such as attention problems, hyperactivity or dyslexia, whether or not the condition was diagnosed by a teacher, doctor or other health professional.

Memory: Limited in the amount of kind of activities that one can do due to frequent periods of confusion or difficulty remembering things. These difficulties may be associated with Alzheimer's disease, brain injuries or other similar conditions.

Developmental: Cognitive limitations due to the presence of a developmental disability or disorder, such as Down syndrome, autism or mental impairment caused by a lack of oxygen at birth.

Psychological: Limited in the amount or kind of activities that one can do due to the presence of an emotional, psychological or psychiatric condition, such as phobias, depression, schizophrenia, drinking or drug problem.

Unknown: The type of disability is unknown if the respondent answered YES to the general questions on activity limitations, but did not provide any YES to the questions about type of disability that followed.

APPENDIX C

Type of Disability - Children

The PALS survey questions allow the identification of the following types of disabilities among children under 15:

Hearing*: Difficulty hearing.

Seeing*: Difficulty seeing.

Speech*: Difficulty speaking and/or being understood.

Mobility:** Difficulty walking. This means walking on a flat firm surface, such as a sidewalk or floor.

Dexterity:** Difficulty using hands or fingers to grasp or hold small objects, such as a pencil or scissors.

Learning:** Difficulty learning due to the presence of a condition, such as attention problems, hyperactivity or dyslexia, whether or not the condition was diagnosed by a teacher, doctor or other health professional.

Developmental delay*:**
Child has a delay in his/her development, either a physical, intellectual or another type of delay.

Developmental disability or disorder:**
Cognitive limitations due to the presence of a developmental disability or disorder, such as Down syndrome, autism or mental impairment caused by a lack of oxygen at birth.

Psychological:**
Limited in the amount or kind of activities that one can do due to the presence of an emotional, psychological or behavioural condition.

Chronic condition*:

Limited in the amount or kind of activities that one can due to the presence of one or more chronic health conditions that have lasted or are expected to last six months or more and that have been diagnosed by a health professional. Examples of chronic conditions are asthma or severe allergies, health condition or disease, kidney condition or disease, cancer, epilepsy, cerebral palsy, Spina Bifida, Cystic Fibrosis, Muscular Dystrophy, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, etc.

Unknown*: The type of disability is unknown if the respondent answered YES to the general questions on activity limitations, but did not provide a YES to the questions about type of disability that followed.

* Applicable to all children under 15.
** Applicable to children aged 5 to 14.
*** Applicable to children under 5.